

# JOSEPH: A TYPE OF CHRIST

By Keith Greer

As we study the Old Testament, we often discuss shadows and types and antitypes. Many of the Old Testament Bible characters also typified Christ. Such is the case with the young man Joseph.

**Sinned against and despised.** “But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.” {Genesis 37:4} Joseph’s brothers hated him because of their father’s favoritism. He also had the God-given ability to interpret dreams, causing his brothers to envy him. Isaiah prophesied that Christ would receive the same kind of treatment from others. “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.” {Isaiah 53:3,4}

**Sold for a price.** One day, as they were in the field, Joseph’s brothers saw him approaching. They saw this as an opportunity to rid themselves of this dreamer. “Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.” {Genesis 37:28} Because of their hatred for Joseph, the brothers sold him into slavery. Later, Jesus would suffer the same fate from a trusted friend who was part of His inner circle. “And said, What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you? And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.” {Matthew 26:15,16}

**Had great love.** Many years later, after Joseph had risen to power in Egypt, his brothers stood before him. He had the power and position to execute vengeance upon them. But he did not. “And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man’s money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them.” {Genesis 42:24,25}

As Jesus hung on the cross, they ridiculed Him, spat upon Him, and taunted Him to come down. He could have asked His Father to send down legions of angels. But He did not. “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” {Romans 5:6-8}

**Sent to preserve life.** After Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, they were fearful of what their lost brother might do to them. But Joseph understood the events of his life had a purpose. “But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.” {Genesis 45:5} He saw the bigger picture. So did Jesus. His

death would bring life to others. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." {Acts 4:12}

**Pardon for the penitent.** Joseph was willing to forgive the penitent. "Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him." {Genesis 45:15} God's Son is also willing to pardon those who are willing to repent and submit to His conditions. {Acts 2:28; 17:30}

By observing the young man Joseph and the life choices he made, as he underwent difficult circumstances, we can learn much about the Lord's character. In no way am I saying that what Joseph did in his life is equal to what God's Son did in dying on the cross – not even close. Yet, the character exhibited by the young man Joseph certainly is worthy for us to consider as we strive to put on the character of our Lord in our own lives. God's children are to be people with great character! \*\*\*